

# The Christian News-Letter

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Edited by  
J. H. OLDHAM

April 21st, 1943

DEAR MEMBER,

As an aid to understanding our times and the Christian task that confronts us, Peter Drucker's recent book, *The Future of Industrial Man*,<sup>1</sup> seems to me of unusual importance. The great difficulty is always to see the wood for the trees, and anyone who has the power to single out of the confused mass of facts and conflicting forces the decisive tendencies and set them in clear relief deserves our gratitude.

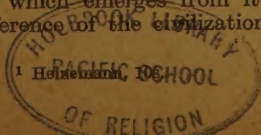
The book has had severe handling from reviewers, some of whom have allowed differences about secondary matters to obscure what is really important. It may paint things with too broad a brush; if your aim is to show what really matters in the contemporary situation, some over-simplification is unavoidable. Drucker's great service is that he makes a few crucial issues stand out so clearly that we can neither evade nor forget them.

## THE MEANING OF THE WAR

He is quite clear what this war is about. It is about one thing—the structure of industrial society. What is at stake in it is the basic principles, purposes and institutions of the new physical reality which has come into existence since James Watt invented the steam engine two hundred years ago. To find the causes of the war exclusively in the German national character or in specifically German beliefs is to miss its real meaning. This is what Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr sought to impress on us in one of our earliest Supplements (C.N.-L. No. 16). What we are fighting against is a false answer to the unanswered problems that belong to our western civilization as a whole. Totalitarianism is a consequence of the collapse of the beliefs and values that gave that civilization its distinctive character. The vital question, for us as well as for our enemies, is how those beliefs and values can find embodiment in the new *industrial* society of the future.

But is not this a familiar question which has been with us ever since what is known as the industrial revolution? No, says Drucker, not in the sense in which we are now forced to deal with it. This is the first war which is being fought wholly as an industrial war, that is to say, in which industry is not an auxiliary but the main fighting force itself. And what stamps its character on the war must also stamp its character on the society which emerges from it. Industry will no longer be on the circumference of the civilization of to-morrow, but will be its centre.

<sup>1</sup> Heinemann, 1941



## AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

It is true that we have been moving towards this for a long time. But, in spite of the unceasing growth of industry, western society through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not an industrial society; in its origins, aims and beliefs it was pre-industrial.<sup>1</sup> In its social life England had one ideal type and social pattern—the country gentleman. There was no social life centering in the industrial world; no community rooted in that world. To take a trivial illustration, it was felt by many to be scandalous that there should be city children who had never seen a cow; it did not seem in the least strange, as it would to-day in Russia, that many children had never seen the inside of a factory.

While the mercantile society of the nineteenth century succeeded in mastering, organizing and integrating industry, its values, standards and institutions were all derived from a pre-industrial society. The growing tension between this social pattern and the expanding industrial reality is the fundamental cause of the convulsions and explosions of the present century.

Nothing can, of course, alter the ultimate dependence of an industrial society on the earth and what it produces. If the laws of this dependence are violated or ignored, the society must in the end collapse. There is an over-ruling "architecture" of nature, to the disciplines of which the life of man must always be related.<sup>2</sup>

But the basic fact of man's dependence on nature does not invalidate Drucker's thesis. The true balance of human life is not here in question. The life of a vigorous society includes many different spheres. What is of cardinal importance is to know which of these spheres is at any particular stage of development socially determinative. Which is the sphere that creates the dominant social values, determines social ideals, confers social prestige and offers the greatest social rewards? In this sense, Drucker maintains, what we are now living in is an industrial society.

"The representative social phenomena of the industrial system of our time are the mass-production plant and the corporation. The assembly line is the representative material environment; the corporation is the representative social institution. The large-scale plant has taken the place of the rural village or of the trading town of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The corporation has replaced the manor and the market as the basic institution in and through which the material reality is organized socially."

<sup>1</sup> Drucker's descriptive term for it is a "mercantile" society, by which he means a society that was based on the rights of property, and that gave social status and function to the individual through his integration in the market.

<sup>2</sup> This truth is impressively presented in K. E. Barlow's *The Discipline of Peace* (Faber & Faber, 8s. 6d.). The current number of *Christendom* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2s.) contains a memorandum by the Church Social Action Committee of the Church Union on "The Church, the Clergy and the Rural Community," and an editorial article commenting on it. The contention of this memorandum is that human life cannot be allowed to conform to the machine, but that the machine must be made subordinate to a pattern of human life which, fundamentally considered, is not created by men; and that it is on the land that men can best learn anew the essential quality of human living in obedience to a law, pattern and rhythm that are not of their own making. The British Council of Churches is also undertaking an enquiry into questions of rural reconstruction and has issued a questionnaire under the title *The Land, the People and the Churches* (21 Bloomsbury Street, W.C. 1, 3d.).



## WHAT MAKES A SOCIETY WORK

Assuming, then, that the society of the future will, for better or worse, be an industrial society, Drucker's book is written round one central topic : How can an industrial society be built as a *free* society ?

But in order to be free, a society must first function as a society. We must, therefore, begin by asking what conditions have to be fulfilled in order that a society may work at all. The answer is that there are two.

The first is that it must be a society which gives to each of its members his recognized place and recognized function. Society has a meaning for the individual only if its aims and activities make sense in terms of his own motives and purposes. He must be able to see some connection between the ends which society as a whole is pursuing and the tasks which he has himself to perform.

The second condition is that power in society must be legitimate power. By this is meant that the exercise of power must be in accord with the fundamental beliefs and values of the society. It must be based on what the members of the society, consciously or unconsciously, acknowledge as rational and right.

Hitlerism in Drucker's view is an attempt to create a functioning industrial society in the above sense. It tried to integrate the members of an industrial system into a society by giving to the individual in the Nazi party, and in the various organizations built round it, a status and function independent of the productive process. His rank in these organizations was in theory, and to a large extent in practice, in no way dependent on his wealth or income or status in the existing society. The Nazis have aimed at off-setting economic inequality by giving equal chances in the non-economic sphere to the economically underprivileged. In factories and businesses the party leader might be a worker or a man formerly unemployed ; in universities it might be the janitor ; in embassies a junior clerk. Out of working hours he was the boss of those whom he had to obey while at work.

But Hitler could find no way of creating a functioning industrial society except by basing it on war and conquest. The only thing which he could find to put in the place of economic man was heroic man. Just for this reason the attempt has broken down. The peoples of Europe are not willing to accept war and conquest as the basic purposes of society. This failure to establish militarism as the supreme aim of life may prove our salvation. If Nazism had been able to find some other basis than war and conquest on which to build a totalitarian slave society, it might have succeeded. Its failure gives us the chance to discover how to achieve a free industrial society.

## FREEDOM IN AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

If the task of the future is to create a free industrial society, we need to know clearly what freedom is and how it can be realized. It is Drucker's firm grasp of the meaning of freedom that is one of the outstanding merits of his book. He fastens on two points of cardinal importance.

He is quite clear, in the first place, that the only basis of freedom is the Christian concept of man's nature, namely, that man is an imperfect

being, able to choose between good and evil, and responsible to God for his choice and actions. All *human* absolutes lead straight to totalitarianism. Freedom is possible only when men believe that there is an absolute truth and right towards which they must strive, but that their own apprehension of them is never more than partial, so that no man or group can claim an absolute right to over-ride others.

The second essential of freedom is that there must never be one sole centre of power. Every principle of power will become tyrannical unless it is limited, checked and controlled by a competing principle.

This distribution of power has, in fact, as Mr. Christopher Dawson continually reminds us, been the source, basis, guarantee and bulwark of personal liberty in western civilization. Christianity taught men that they had as persons a dual loyalty—to God and Caesar, to Church and State. It is from the tension between the claims of Church and State that European liberties have sprung. The single all-embracing, omni-competent State is the end of freedom, and for this reason the great danger of our times.

We cannot here follow out Drucker's discussion of the bearing of these principles on the growth of a free industrial society. The re-establishment of a self-governing social sphere, not subject to the direct control of the political government, he holds to be our most urgent task. What he says about this is highly stimulating.

But those who go to the book for precise guidance will be disappointed. Critics have charged him with being indefinite and inconclusive. But his refusal to put forward any cut-and-dried scheme is in large part deliberate. Just because he believes that man is man and not God, he is convinced that it is not given to us to see our way far in advance or to bend reality to preconceived plans. To trust to improvisation, which is only another name for inertia, would be fatal; we must leave behind us once for all the idea that "muddling through" can win either the war or the peace. We need imagination, boldness, preparation, planning. But that is something entirely different from committing ourselves to one, consistent, absolute system and supposing that the wild, insurgent forces of life will conform to schemes devised by small human minds. Let us hold firmly to the faith that man is truly man in so far as he is responsible and free, that no society can persist which does not give social status and function to its individual members, and that power must be legitimate if it is to be stable and enduring, and in the light and strength of these convictions let us deal with concrete situations as they arise. By courageously following this path we shall reach a growing understanding of the basic social purpose of an industrial society.

That is an attitude to the future which seems to me in accord both with what is best in the British political tradition and with the Christian insistence on the creatureliness and, at the same time, the dignity of man.

## THE DEMAND ON CHRISTIANS

A change in society as revolutionary as that described by Drucker cannot take place without requiring much more radical adjustments in Christian thinking and practice than most Christians have even begun



to imagine to be necessary. An industrial society is bound to develop a new set of values and attitudes. If, from being one sphere, however important, in a society deriving its aims and institutions from a pre-industrial age, industry becomes the socially constitutive sphere, giving a decisive direction to social purposes and determining social standards, the future influence of Christianity must depend on its success in relating its message to the new outlook and morality, whether by the way of permeation and inspiration or of criticism and conflict. In spite of its impressive missionary achievements in ministering to the needs of expanding urban populations, the Church is probably among existing institutions the one most deeply rooted by its tradition and in its institutional forms in a pre-industrial society.

In facing the formidable task of Christianizing an industrial society we are exceptionally fortunate in this country in our heritage from the past. There exists in our industrial towns and mining villages, more particularly in the north, a whole structure of working-class institutions—trade unions, the co-operative movement, the adult education movement, friendly societies and a host of other clubs and societies—that were closely connected in their origin with non-conformist Christianity.<sup>1</sup> While the specifically Christian initiative and leadership has been largely lost, there remain many links with the life of the Churches, and the movements still bear many marks of their origin. It is a fact of great significance that the co-operative movement is firmly rooted in an industrial culture and that its inspiration has been so largely Christian. It is a standing example of the way in which industrial production and large business corporations can be kept responsible to the community.

A further asset in this country is the enlightened and humane outlook, derived in large part from the Christian tradition and inspired by Christian motives, which characterizes the attitude of some leading industrialists and managers of industry.<sup>2</sup>

From these favourable elements in the situation we may rightly take what encouragement they yield. But they do not alter the fact that the radical changes in outlook, values, relationships and institutions consequent on the coming into existence of an industrial society confront Christianity with what is perhaps the most formidable challenge in its history.

Ernst Jünger, whose influence on the thinking of the younger generation in Germany has probably been greater than that of any other writer, asserts in his book, *Der Arbeiter* (*The Worker*), published on the eve of the Nazi Revolution, that technical mass-production is the most decisively anti-Christian force that has appeared in history. It is not the machine or technology in themselves that are significant, but the fact that they make possible an unprecedented accumulation of human power. They have irrevocably, in his view, made power the

<sup>1</sup> Attention was called to this very important fact in a Supplement by Mr. W. G. Symons (C.N.-L. No. 92) which attracted wide attention.

<sup>2</sup> As exemplified, for instance, in Mr. Samuel Courtauld's widely read and much discussed pamphlet, *Government and Industry* (Macmillan, 6d.). One of our members, who is the manager of a very large undertaking, sent me recently the typescript of some of his addresses, in which it is urged that the cardinal principle on which human relations in industry must be based is that of group co-operation for the common good, and that the problem can never be solved except by those who in their hearts really love their fellow-men.

central reality in human life. The future of man lies in giving a passionate assent to this fact. The modern mass-production plant is the model for the modern totalitarian State.

There is no getting away from the fact that even in this country, in spite of our inheritance from the past, only a tiny fraction of those engaged in the vast business of production, whether as workers, technical staff, managers or owners, have any active interest in the concerns of the Church.

But numbers are not the chief thing. If the heaven were there, it might quickly spread. A more fundamental question is where the individuals are to be found in whose experience the gulf between the two worlds of the mass-production plant and the tremendous assertions of the Christian creed is really bridged. Unless there are minds in which the synthesis is in some measure achieved, there is no living germ out of which a *Christian* industrial society can grow.

Those engaged in the process of production find themselves caught and swept along by a relentless impersonal force. Their lives are conditioned and determined by social pressures beyond the reach of their personal will and influence. They live with machines, and their minds cannot but be in some degree assimilated to them. They are trained in a science that is concerned with what can be measured and manipulated. The routine of their lives rarely forces on their attention, and normally leaves little leisure to consider, the things of the spirit. The Christian mysteries lie very far away. Theologians and clergy, on the other hand, whose pre-occupation is with these mysteries, have for the most part no first-hand knowledge of the world of the mass-production plant; they have never felt its pressures "on their pulses."

The two worlds do not in this country, as we have seen, stand wholly apart. Let us give full weight to such interpenetration as exists. Tiny beginnings of fresh adjustments may, perhaps, be seen in the development of industrial chaplaincies, and in such experiments as the undertaking of work in a paper-mill at a craftsman's wage for an eight-hour day by an ordained member of the Iona Community, acknowledged by the works as a parson at the bench.<sup>1</sup>

But outward contacts are of value only if they lead on to something deeper. If anyone were to assert that industry, even in this country, is conducted without any conscious reference to Christian dogma, it would be hard to give him the lie. What is needed is a fundamental and costly change in our consciousness. The Christian mind has to become industrially conscious, that is to say, more deeply aware of the purposes and problems, the values and tensions of an industrial society, and at the same time, as a result of this experience, more profoundly and assuredly Christian.

## THE FUNDAMENTAL CHOICE

A new physical reality is something that we cannot evade. Unless we react to it rightly, it must in the end destroy us.

It is difficult to speak of the Christian faith in which such a crisis may be confronted without making things appear too easy and simple.

<sup>1</sup> *The Coracle*, March 1943 (Acheson House, Canongate, Edinburgh, 6d.).



It is the besetting temptation of all our preaching to dispose of vital issues in thought and word, and so to engage in a phantom, not a real, fight. Our witness can make no deep impact on our age so long as it comes out of a sheltered existence which has never been exposed to the pressures, tensions and real problems of an industrial society.

A thinker like Jünger can exercise on us a bracing influence, because he sees so clearly, and feels so intensely, the real nature of the crisis. The new physical reality dominates his vision, and his response to it is fierce and unswerving. Man has no alternative but to ally himself with this relentless concentration of power—to crush or to be crushed. It creates a new relationship between men, a fiercer love and a more terrible pitilessness. Man has no way in the future but one: he must renounce happiness, steel both his weapons and his heart, and surrender himself to destiny.

What this view takes for granted is that the new physical reality is man's ultimate environment. But what if, on the contrary, his ultimate environment is God, and the end of the creative process, as St. Paul believed, the manifestation of the sons of God? The meaning of an industrial society is seen in that case in a totally different light.

We can confront and master the demonic forces which man's inventiveness has released only through the power of a greater reality. It is vain to oppose to them our human longings for a better world. They go their way relentlessly, irrespective of our desires. The question on which all turns is whether God is, and what He is. It is from the events which we recall at this season of the Christian year that Christian faith in God derives its content and depth. The future of an industrial society may really hinge on the truth of the Christian claim that there is in the universe of reality, founded irremovably in history, that which is more real, more enduring, more significant, more decisive than the physical reality of technical production which is determining the shape of our present world.

## THE DUAL TASK

It is plain that in an industrial society the Church has a dual task to fulfil. The imposing weight and concentrated power of technical production tempts men to regard themselves as essentially producers, and through their productive capacity arbiters of power and possessors of all things. Christianity asserts on the contrary that man is not primarily producer but man, and that he is man in virtue of his relation to God.

If man is more than producer, he cannot find the fulfilment of his nature wholly within the productive process. That fulfilment can be found only in the Church as a community of love. It is one of the greatest shortcomings of the Church in modern times that, in spite of some outstanding examples, it has failed to achieve on a large scale a fellowship, the loyalties of which transcend and provide compensation for the inequalities of the economic system. What Hitler has tried to do through the Nazi party and its organizations the Church might have done at a higher level by creating a society in which quite different values from those of the existing social order manifestly prevailed.

The need for such a community will remain whatever progress may be made in redressing the injustices of the social order.

But, however true it may be that the fulfilment of man's life lies outside the productive process, it is essential that the productive system should not be a *contradiction* of that fulfilment. If men's experiences in their working hours give the lie to what Christianity asserts about human destiny they will reject what it tells them. Unless Christianity is more than a compensation for the shortcomings of real life, it can have no strong hold over men and certainly no power to transform society. The productive system can never be the fulfilment of man's life, but it must be part of that fulfilment. The meaning of Christianity must have a meaning for the purposes of industry and for relations within industry.

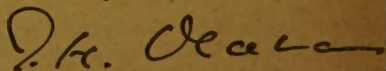
In addressing ourselves to this second task one of the most favourable points of attack is the position of youth in industry. We shall, of course, be merely evading the problem if our efforts are limited to doing the best we can for youth under existing conditions. It is another matter if we make up our minds about what is due to boys and girls, if they are to grow into a full human life, and face the whole question of industrial organization and the distribution of economic power in the light of this demand. We are giving our major attention to this subject, and you may expect to hear a good deal about it in the coming weeks and months.

## THE SUPPLEMENT

It is in the setting of the issues raised in this Letter that this week's Supplement, dealing with a development of far-reaching importance in modern industry, has to be read. The Supplement has grown out of discussions in a small group, most of the members of which are managers of important undertakings.

As the writer indicates, the Supplement opens up large questions for future discussion. In particular, there are two of the greatest importance. The first concerns the relation between owners and managers. It is a question of great moment where, in fact, power in industry actually resides. The second is how power in industry can be made responsible. It is a main contention of Drucker's book that the power of big business corporations has become irresponsible power, and that the central problem that calls for solution, if we are to have a free industrial society, is how power in industry can be made legitimate power.

Yours sincerely,



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## THE MANAGERS OF INDUSTRY

By BASIL SMALLPEICE

The recent publication, first in the United States and then in this country, of a book by James Burnham<sup>1</sup> has served to direct attention to a phenomenon which is widely recognized, but which has nevertheless been the object of surprisingly little comment—the emergence of a class, if you will, of managers in industry, having interests and objects separate and distinct from those of capital or labour. The main theme of the book is that “we are now in a period of social transition . . . a period characterized, that is, by an unusually rapid rate of change of the most important economic, social, political and cultural institutions of society. This transition is *from* the type of society which we have called capitalist or bourgeois to a type of society which we shall call *managerial*. . . . Within the new social structure, a different social group or class—the managers—will be the dominant or ruling class.”

It is commonly assumed that the only alternative to capitalism is socialism, and it is this assumption that Burnham challenges. He was among those who believed that the Russian revolution would produce a classless socialism. But he found that, contrary to the hopes of its organizers and to his own expectations, the revolution gave birth to a very different form of society. Instead of a classless society, there emerged a strong ruling class of managers, who derived their power, not from private property rights (since they had been abolished), but from the very fact of their position as managers and controllers of the instruments of production; and instead of socialism, Burnham found that the distribution of incomes in

Russia was quite as unequal as in the United States, and that the managers had assumed the rôle of the exploiting class.

As he sees it, the despotism of the managers is complete. “The autocracy of the Russian regime is the most extreme that has ever existed in human history. . . . Every shred of freedom and democracy has by now been purged from Russian life. No opposition of any kind (the life-blood of any freedom) is permitted, no independent rights are possessed by any organization or institution.” He believes, moreover, that society is bound to develop along similar lines in Western Europe and in America. But that is no inevitable consequence. In presenting his argument, he is guilty of confusing two facts which must be carefully distinguished from one another: the emergence of the managers on the one hand, and on the other the concentration of all power in the hands of an omni-competent and totalitarian state. The two do not necessarily hang together.

### WHO ARE THE MANAGERS?

Before going any farther, let us be clear about whom we are talking when we use the word “manager.” The manager, of course, is the natural and inevitable result of the increase in the scale on which industry has been conducted. A century and a half ago there were very few firms in this country who employed more than twenty-five people; under such conditions the owner of the business was able to manage it himself and to supervise everybody employed in it. To-day, nearly half the factory population work in firms employing more than 250 people. Even where owner-

<sup>1</sup> *The Managerial Revolution* (Putnam, 7s. 6d.).

ship remains in the hands of a single individual, the business tends to be of such a size that the owner himself can no longer control and direct the operations of everyone employed in it; it has become necessary to employ managers to do this work for him in various spheres of the business. In general, however, ownership is no longer personal. It is diffused over large numbers of small shareholders, who perforce have to leave the direction of general policy to the directors they appoint and the day-to-day execution of that policy to managers appointed by those directors.

Burnham defines the managers as those who carry out the functions of "the technical direction and co-ordination of the processes of production."<sup>1</sup> He points out that in a modern factory employees on their own will not be successful in producing goods; the diverse tasks which they have to undertake must be organized and co-ordinated so that the different materials, tools, machines and workers are all available at the proper place and moment and in the proper numbers. This work of direction and co-ordination is a highly specialized function in itself. It is not the same thing as ownership, though the same person may be both an owner and a manager. It may require acquaintance with the physical and social sciences and with engineering, but, he says, it is important not to confuse this function with scientific and engineering work as such. In this context, the engineer and the specialist working directly in industry are only in the category of highly-skilled workers; they have no functions of guiding, administering and organizing the processes of production, functions which are the distinctive mark of the manager.

## THE NATURE OF GOOD MANAGEMENT

Management, then, is not simply a matter of technical ability. It is, of course, necessary for the manager to

have a working knowledge of the technical processes carried out by the people he has to supervise; but, assuming a background of practical knowledge, the two qualities which are most needed in the good manager are the ability to plan and the ability to lead. As to planning, it is perhaps worth emphasizing that it is just as possible to plan work in industry so as to allow for a maximum amount of personal initiative within the framework of a given system, as it is to plan work which allows for none at all. It is just as possible to plan for freedom, to borrow Professor Mannheim's phrase, as it is to plan for regimentation.

Leadership in industry, however, is not simply a matter of exercising authority conferred by status or backed by a kind of military discipline. Nor is it even a matter of exercising authority by virtue of personal example or excellence in a common task. For, broadly speaking, the manager in modern industry cannot compare with his subordinates in the performance of any of their several tasks; his occupation is different, not only in detail, but also in kind, from that of his men. "The modern leader is no longer quite a member of his group, working by their side and sharing their daily lives."<sup>2</sup> He is arbitrarily imposed on his group from outside, against their will or at any rate without their express consent.

Yet, starting with these disadvantages, the manager has to win the confidence of his group so as to bring out the best that is in each one of them. This he can do only by earning their respect for his straight dealing and honesty of purpose, for his regard for their legitimate interests and aspirations, and for his effectiveness as a manager. For this, he must have a sure understanding of human nature. If managers cannot learn to lead without resorting to compulsion, then we shall have authoritarianism in industry, within the ostensible framework of a democratic society.

<sup>1</sup> *The Managerial Revolution.*

<sup>2</sup> T. N. Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society* (Oxford University Press, 10s. 6d.).



And for many people, industry is what matters, not national politics nor any other part of the façade of democracy.

## SELECTION AND TRAINING

It becomes all the more necessary then to consider carefully the selection and training of managers for industry. Until a few years ago the practice still lingered in one large firm of managers being selected by obtaining the largest number of votes from shareholders, in much the same way as persons in need of assistance are admitted to some of the benevolent institutions. Even in more normal instances, however, the managers are selected primarily because of their technical ability to carry out certain tasks, rather than for their ability to plan and to lead.

Our experience of rapid expansion in war-time has shown us that the ability to manage cannot be implanted overnight, or even by a short intensive course of three months' duration, in adult persons in whom the necessary background training in leadership and planning is lacking. This initial training ought to be given when our future manager is still adolescent. To consider how it should be given would lead us into the realm of education. All that need be said now is to urge that part of the education of the adolescent should be recognized as training for future leadership in industry; and that society should have some means of discovering at a relatively early age those young people in whom these qualities of leadership and ability to organize are latent, so that they can be selected, irrespective of class, for higher education.

Later, when they are between twenty and thirty, it is necessary to provide training courses to give intending managers the opportunity to study the details and technique of their chosen profession. A beginning was made in this direction by the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants and by the Institute of Industrial Administration. Before the war, too, the Confederation of Management Associations, representing bodies such

as the Works' Managers Association and the Office Managers Association, had prepared an examination syllabus for courses to be undertaken either at technical colleges up and down the country or by correspondence; but the advent of war interrupted these developments.

## MANAGEMENT AS A PROFESSION

The institutes and associations just mentioned, and similar bodies, came into being during the last twenty-five years in response to the long-felt need of those who practised the specialized functions of management in industry to meet others doing the same kind of work and to discuss their common problems. From mere discussion there soon developed a common attitude to industry and the world around them. Then came the desirability of providing new entrants with courses of theoretical and practical training at the beginning of their careers, so as to ensure the maintenance of a recognized standard of competence. Though their membership was small in relation to the field to be covered, these associations were well on their way towards acquiring the chief distinguishing characteristics of professionalism.

The results of such a development would be far-reaching. That managers should come to possess a professional outlook, involving as it does a sense of responsibility to the community, would be a social gain of considerable value. By virtue of his position of authority over people, the manager's action necessarily affects the lives of many for good or ill in countless ways, mental as well as physical. If, then, it is considered an advantage to society that the doctor, who is responsible for the bodily health of his patients, should be subject to professional standards and a professional code, is it not all the more necessary that the practice of management should be subject to similar safeguards?

There is, too, little doubt but that at present the employed status involves a sense of dependence on the em-

ployer, which tends to produce a breed of "yes-men." But the manager who belongs to a profession will experience a feeling of solidarity with others of his kind, not in the sense of belonging to a Trade Union, but because he will feel able to take his stand on the common attitude and experience of his fellows in his vocational association. He will be "attached primarily to his profession whence he goes out, as occasion may offer, to render his services in some co-operative organization, and whither he returns. . . . The sense of dependence and oppression will be lifted and a measure of freedom, dignity and responsibility" given to him.<sup>1</sup>

### A HUMANIZING AGENT

An association of managers, too, which has acquired prestige and authority, can be expected to guard jealously the uses to which its techniques are put by those who use them. "Professional men are craftsmen and all craftsmen are distressed to see bad workmanship."<sup>1</sup> But there is more to it than just bad workmanship; they will be concerned to see that their techniques are not used for anti-social purposes. Professional standards are moral standards, not standards of convenience.

The emergence of moral standards inside industry itself is a development pregnant with promise. Most managers are not directly interested in profits. It is true that they are often given an indirect interest, in the form of bonus or commission, by those whose interest is direct. But their real interest should be in the human material they are called upon to manage. Their primary aim is not the same as that of capital, to make profits. It is rather that of organizing work in the factories so as to produce what the community needs, in conditions which enable workmen to remain human, without degenerating into "being merely instrumental . . . more or less emasculated factory hands."<sup>2</sup>

John Ruskin once observed: "In our factories we fabricate everything except men." Some eighty years later Eric Gill was moved to add: "We may now go farther; we may say that in our factories we make all things for sale, and destroy the men and women who are to buy them."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps such a trend was inevitable in a society dominated by the profit rule;<sup>3</sup> and since managers are not primarily concerned with the financial side of affairs, perhaps it is to them that society must look to stop the depersonalization of man in industry.

There is, of course, a grave danger of miscarriage if the managers concentrate too much on mere technical and organizational efficiency, to the exclusion or belittlement of the human factor. But if they can once be brought to realize the over-ruling importance of the latter, and if, in their professional associations, they acquire a group consciousness of their mission in society, perhaps they are the people in whose hands is the power to restore to life a sense of human satisfaction in work. We have the opportunity, at all events, of attempting to preserve and reinforce the Christian values relating to the human person.

### A NEW CENTRE OF POWER

Of itself, therefore, the rise of this new class of managers is neither good nor bad; it depends on what we make of it. But it opens up large questions relating to the future structure of society, which must of necessity be reserved for later treatment. It is evident, however, from what has been said already, that there is now an additional element in industry standing outside the traditional conflict between owners and workers. There is, too, in the professional management associations the beginning of a horizontal organisation which may well come to exercise an authority cutting right across the existing pyramidal structure of industry. A new centre of power has come into existence.

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Carr-Saunders and P. A. Wilson, *The Professions* (Oxford University Press, 25s.).

<sup>2</sup> Eric Gill, *Sacred and Secular* (Dent, 7s. 6d.).

<sup>3</sup> *vide* "The Profit Motive in Industry," Supplement to C.N.-L. No. 152.

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